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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Automatic Dissemination

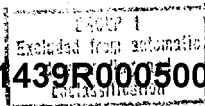
1. Some years ago the Office of Communications developed a phased Automated Communications Terminal (ACT) program for the automation of its Signal Center and the cable dissemination process. The phases were:

- a. ACT I - Automation of Signal Center Functions.
- b. ACT II - Machine-assisted dissemination of electrically received cables.
- c. ACT III - Automation of the cable printing and distribution process.

2. ACT I was approved, funded, and is in the final stages of implementation at this time. The implementation of ACT II was suspended in 1971 due to recommendations that a careful study of the Central Reference Service's Machine-Assisted Dissemination (MAD) system be made to determine whether it might be a better vehicle in the long-term interests of the Agency and involve a more economical expenditure. The merits and demerits of the two systems have been debated with increasing emotion since that time. In order to seek the best possible solution to what had become an impasse between the Office of Communications and the Central Reference Service, in January I directed a joint study and proposal for the automation of cable dissemination. A final report has been furnished to me which reflects continued disagreement between the proponents of the systems advocated by these two offices. I have reviewed the pros and cons in this debate in considerable detail and recommend to you the following:

- a. Dissemination must be an integral element of transmission of messages, since their substance is

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frequently so time-critical as to preclude any possibility of a gap between these functions. I thus recommend that the Office of Communications be instructed to proceed with the development of an automatic dissemination system.

b. The present Office of Communications proposal (ACT II) contemplates a totally self-sufficient system with its own computer support. I believe the Office of Communications should be directed to rely to the extent feasible on the Automatic Data Processing equipment currently in the Agency's possession or being acquired, including that in the Central Reference Service. Any recommendations relating to acquisition of new material should be coordinated with the Office of Computer Services and the Information Processing Board.

c. The Office of Communications automatic cable dissemination system should handle all traffic presently received electrically by the Agency or which can in the future be received electrically.

d. The Office of Communications system should plan for electrical distribution within the Agency to the extent required for maximum service to customers within budget availabilities.

e. The Central Reference Service should be charged with the development of index and retrieval systems for all electrical and non-electrical traffic received by the Agency or sent by the Agency, with the exception of Clandestine Service operational material, counterintelligence records, selected compartmented project material, and certain DD/S&T data transmissions (such as telemetry and ELINT analogs). Its procedure for doing so should be automated to the extent feasible within budgetary limitations.

f. The Central Reference Service will continue to disseminate non-electrical material received or sent by the Agency with the exception of the categories listed above.

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g. The Central Reference Service and the Office of Communications will establish a close working relationship between the dissemination and indexing activities and the development of such techniques as are feasible by which the two functions will complement each other (common logs, subject indicators, and the like).

h. The Central Reference Service will work with the analysis and production offices within the Agency, and with such other Intelligence Community agencies as may be feasible, to develop the most effective mix of central bibliographic and document retrieval files and special purpose document retrieval files for individual customer offices, analysts, or other requestors.

i. The Office of Communications will prosecute with the appropriate offices the electrification of transmission and dissemination of [REDACTED] reports within the Community, as well as the replacement of present hard copy NSA material by electrical messages.

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3. This action should call for expenditures in the neighborhood of \$500,000 during Fiscal Year 1973 for contractual assistance, including software design. Equipment acquisition, if required, would be in addition. I am convinced that this expenditure will be well warranted in terms of improved efficiency in future years. Despite its apparent larger initial investment, I believe it preferable in the long term to the alternative of further development of the Central Reference Service MAD system.

W. E. Colby
Executive Director-Comptroller